

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BONN 17822 01 OF 02 311903Z

42

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 084242

R 311526Z OCT 75
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3992
INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 17822

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS CINC USAREUR FOR POLAD, CINC EUR
VAIHINGEN, SECDEF WASHDC

EE. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PO, MILI, GW
SUBJECT: DEFMIN LEBER'S COMMENTS ON SITUATION IN
PORTUGAL

REF: BONN 16915

BEGIN SUMMARY: FRG DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER BRIEFED THE
AMBASSADOR ON HIS IMPRESSION OF EVENTS IN PORTUGAL.
WHILE NOT DIFFERING SIGNIFICANTLY FROM HIS EARLIER
VIEWS REPORTED REFTEL, LEBER ADDED A NUMBER OF NEW
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BONN 17822 01 OF 02 311903Z

POINTS. LEBER REAFFIRMED THE FRG INTEREST IN RETAINING

AT LEAST CO-USE RIGHTS AT THE BEJA AIR BASE FOR THE
LUFTWAFFE. END SUMMARY.

1. ON OCTOBER 30 AMBASSADOR HILLENBRAND MET WITH
DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER TO DISCUSS LEBER'S IMPRESSIONS
OF THE PORTUGUESE SITUATION BASED ON HIS RECENT VISIT
THERE AS WELL AS THE DISCUSSIONS HE HAS HAD WITH CARLOS
FABIAO, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE PORTUGUESE ARMY, WHO
BEGAN A VISIT TO THE FRG ON OCTOBER 27.

2. REFERRING TO HIS RECENT VISIT TO PORTUGAL, LEBER
DESCRIBED DISCUSSIONS IN LISBON WITH SOARES AND TWO
OTHER POLITICAL LEADERS IN WHICH THERE WAS AN ALLUSION
TO A PURPORTED CONVERSATION BETWEEN SOVIET CHAIRMAN
BREZHNEV AND PRESIDENT FORD. ALLGLEDLY, BREZHNEV
TOLD PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES DURING THE LATTER'S VISIT
TO MOSCOW THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD INFORMED HIM THAT THE
WEST HAD IN EFFECT WRITTEN OFF PORTUGAL. ACCORDING TO
LEBER'S PORTUGUESE INTERLOCUTORS, GOMES HAD ACCEPTED
BREZHNEV'S ASSERTION WITHOUT OFFERING ANY REBUTTAL, AND
THIS CANARD WAS NOW GOING THE ROUNDS IN LISBON. LEBER
SAID HE KNEW THE REPORT COULD NOT BE TRUE, BUT
NOTED THAT IT WAS BEING USED IN A WAY DAMAGING TO
WESTERN INTERESTS.

3. LEBER CONTINUED THAT SOME PORTUGUESE BELIEVE THE
SITUATION MAY SOON REACH THE STAGE OF A PUTSCH. LEBER
SAID NOVEMBER 11 IS A KEY DATE SINCE ANGOLA ATTAINS
INDEPENDENCE ON THAT DAY, AND IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT
THE COMMUNISTS MAY ATTEMPT ONE THEN. ANOTHER
DANGEROUS PERIOD, ACCORDING TO LEBER, WILL BE IN SIX
MONTHS. THIS MAY HAPPEN WHEN, AFTER THE ELECTIONS,
IN THE PROCESS OF FORMING A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT, THE
COMMUNISTS MUST BE ROOTED OUT OF
THE BUREAUCRACY, MEDIA AND ARMY. LEBER NOTED THAT THE
COMMUNISTS HAD NEVER BEFORE IN HISTORY GIVEN UP POWER
PEACEFULLY AND THERE WAS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THEY
WOULD ON THIS OCCASION. THEREFORE, THE SITUATION MIGHT
LEAD TO A COMMUNIST PUTSCH OR OUTRIGHT CIVIL WAR.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BONN 17822 01 OF 02 311903Z

4. ON THE QUESTION OF THE FRG AIR FORCE BASE AT BEJA,
LEBER SAID THAT A JOINT FRG-PORTUGUESE WORKING GROUP
WOULD MEET IN NOVEMBER FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS. THE
PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF WOULD LIKE TO
ASSUME CONTROL OF THE BASE, SINCE THE ENTIRE
PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE COULD BE BASED THERE. THIS WOULD
ENABLE HIM TO MAINTAIN TIGHTER CONTROL OVER THE UNIT
COMMANDERS. LEBER SAID THAT THE GUIDELINES FOR THE

FRG IN THE UPCOMING DISCUSSIONS WILL BE TO CONSIDER CAREFULLY BOTH THE ALLIANCE'S INTERESTS AS WELL AS THOSE OF THE PORTUGUESE. SHOULD THE FRG AGREE TO TURN OVER THE BASE, IT WOULD ONLY BE WITH THE CONDITION THAT FRG CO-USE OF THE BASE MUST BE GUARANTEED.

5. LEBER NEXT TURNED TO THE DISCUSSIONS HE HAS HAD

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 BONN 17822 02 OF 02 311545Z

41

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 081937

R 311526Z OCT 75
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3993
INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME

S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 17822

EXDIS

WITH FABIAO IN BONN. LEBER REPORTED THAT, ACCORDING TO FABIAO, THE SITUATION IN PORTUGAL WAS NOT GOOD. THE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF HAD STATED THERE WAS NO LONGER ANY

AUTHORITY IN THE COUNTRY, WHETHER STATE, MILITARY OR CHURCH. THE COUNTRY IS BASICALLY DISORGANIZED. MORE-OVER, THE BUREAUCRACY IS INFESTED WITH LEFTISTS WHO BLOCK OR DELAY THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSED AID PROJECTS WHICH THE PORTUGUESE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE PREPARING. ALSO, THE MEDIA ARE BASICALLY UNDER THE CONTROL OF LEFT EXTREMISTS. FINALLY, THE ECONOMIC SITUATION, ACCORDING TO FABIAO, IS CATASTROPHIC. THERE ARE SEVERE DEFICITS IN THE BUDGET AND IN THE TRADE AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS. LEBER POINTED OUT THAT PORTUGAL EXPECTS TO RUN OUT OF RESERVES BY THE END

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BONN 17822 02 OF 02 311545Z

OF OCTOBER AND WILL HAVE TO SELL PART OF ITS STOCKPILE OF GOLD TO MEET ITS OBLIGATIONS. COMPOUNDING THE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES IS THE FACT THAT INEXPERIENCED WORKERS ARE EXERTING TOO MUCH INFLUENCE ON COMPANY MANAGEMENT. GOODS THAT HAVE BEEN PRODUCED CANNOT BE SOLD. THE CURRENT RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT IS 12, WITH A RISE TO 18-20 PREDICTED FOR THE WINTER.

6. TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, FABIAO POINTED OUT THAT THE DAILY INFLUX OF ANGOLAN REFUGEES POSES A VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM. FABIAO SAID THAT ORIGINALLY SOME ANGOLANS HAD FOUND WORK, BUT THEN QUIT, BLAMING THE STATE FOR THEIR PLIGHT AS REFUGEES AND DEMANDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT. FABIAO BELIEVES THAT MANY REFUGEES WILL HAVE TO LOOK BEYOND PORTUGAL FOR A NEW HOME, AND HE NAMED BRAZIL AND VENEZUELA AS POSSIBLE HAVENS. FABIAO HOPED THAT AN INTERNATIONAL SOLUTION COULD BE FOUND TO THE PROBLEM; OTHERWISE, THE REFUGEE SITUATION WOULD REPRESENT AN ADDITIONAL DANGER TO INTERNAL STABILITY IN PORTUGAL.

7. FABIAO ADMITTED TO LEBER THAT THE ARMY CAN NO LONGER BE CENTRALLY CONTROLLED. IN HIS OPINION, APPROXIMATELY 70 OF THE OFFICERS SUPPORT THE GOP. HOWEVER, THE COMMUNISTS EXERT A STRONG INFLUENCE ON SOLDIERS IN THE RANKS AND NCO'S.

8. IN COMMENTING ON FUTURE POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY, FABIAO SAID THAT THE COMMUNISTS MIGHT TRY A PUTSCH AS THE COUNTRY SLOWLY SINKS INTO CHAOS. HOWEVER, HE STATED HIS BELIEF THAT, IF THE PERIOD OF DISINTEGRATION EXTENDS OVER A LONG TIME, THEN MANY PORTUGUESE MIGHT TURN AGAIN TO A RIGHTIST DICTATORSHIP. FABIAO ALSO SAID THAT IF A LEFTIST PUTSCH WERE TO SUCCEED, IT WOULD PROBABLY RESULT ONLY IN A TRANSITIONAL REGIME AND EVENTUALLY BE OVERTHROWN BY THE RIGHTISTS.

9. LEBER SAID HE DESCRIBED TO FABIAO THE ALTERNATIVES WHICH PORTUGAL FACES DEPENDING UPON HOW THE SITUATION DEVELOPS INTERNALLY. SHOULD IT GO COMMUNIST, LEBER
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BONN 17822 02 OF 02 311545Z

WARNED THE WEST WOULD TURN ITS BACK, DEVELOPMENT WOULD STAGNATE AND THE STANDARD OF LIVING WOULD DETERIORATE. SHOULD THE PORTUGUESE DECIDE UPON DEMOCRATIC PLURALISM, THEN THE WEST WOULD BE RECEPTIVE TO CALLS FOR ASSISTANCE AND DO ALL IT COULD TO HELP THE PORTUGUESE. LEBER CITED THE FRG TO FABIAO AS A PRIME EXAMPLE OF HOW A FORMER DICTATORSHIP CAN DEVELOP FREE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS. LEBER SAID THAT WHILE IN LISBON HE HAD INVITED THE PORTUGUESE TO SEND A DELEGATION TO THE FRG TO STUDY THE GERMAN EXAMPLE. ROSA COUTINHO THANKED THE DEFENSE MINISTER FOR THE INVITATION, BUT SAID THE PORTUGUESE MUST MAKE THEIR OWN MISTAKES.

10. LEBER INDICATED THAT THE PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF WILL BE COMING TO THE FRG NEXT. LEBER IS FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY THE MAN AND IS HOPEFUL THAT HIS VISIT TO THE FRG WILL TEND TO STRENGTHEN DEMOCRATIC FORCES IN PORTUGAL.
HILLENBRAND

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MINISTERIAL VISITS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BONN17822
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750378-1142
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975103/aaaaabyx.tel
Line Count: 252
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 BONN 16915
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 APR 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <29 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEFMIN LEBER'S COMMENTS ON SITUATION IN PORTUGAL
TAGS: PINT, MILI, PO, GE, (LEBER, GEORG)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006